

Apple Surveys Its Customers

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In the June issue of *Apple Direct*, we shared some data from IntelliQuest that indicates what types of products Macintosh users are planning to buy. But let's drop back a bit. What is it that Macintosh customers are already using?

Knowing what the installed base of Macintosh configurations looks like is vital to your business. How many megs do users typically have? What types of peripherals do they use? How often do they buy new applications?

Apple recently completed a research study to answer these questions (and many more). The survey involved almost 2,000 Macintosh users from 5 countries (the U.S., Canada, Australia, France, and Germany), with about half of them from the U.S. The study explored the types of configurations these users had and their general satisfaction level with Macintosh.

Representative Sample. The survey respondents all acquired their systems between 1986 and 1989, and had one of the following systems: the Macintosh Plus, SE, SE/30, Macintosh II, IIx, or IICx. The sample represented all the markets in which Apple participates—business, education, home, and government. About a quarter of them have four or more years of experience on the Macintosh (meaning all Macintosh experience and not just the system they're currently using), while 38 percent have between two and four years, and the remainder less than two.

For reasons of confidentiality, we can't share all the results with you, but we can give you some of the highlights. In general, these users seemed to possess a fairly high degree of

sophistication. For instance, about two-thirds of them knew the version of the system software they were running.

The study also found that a very high percentage of Macintosh users have at least 2 megs of memory (and are thus already System 7.0-capable), that hard-disk usage is quite pervasive, that scanners and modems are widely-used peripherals, and that Macintosh customers tend to use many applications and continue to buy more.

Breaking the 2 Meg Limit. Close to half the respondents to the survey had at least two megabytes of memory in their systems. (Fig. 1.) The picture shifts a bit when we break down the data between compact and modular users. Even then, more than a third of the compact users have 2 megabytes or more, while the figure goes up to almost 80 percent for the modular users. (Fig. 2)

Hard Drive Heaven. Hard-disk usage is 90 percent overall; when 1989 purchasers are considered separately, the overall figure goes up to 94 percent.

Interestingly, a fairly high number of users have both internal and external hard drives (Fig. 3). Among compact users, nine percent have both, while 14 percent of the modular users do.

As with internal memory, the pervasive-ness of hard-drive configurations means that a significant proportion of the Macintosh installed base is already prepared, hardware-wise, for System 7.0.

Scanners for the Rest of Us. What percentage of Macintosh customers would you guess are using scanners? If you said 25 percent, you're in tune with the respondents to this survey. This figure goes up to 48 percent when just modular users are considered (Fig. 4).

The study didn't inquire about scanner ownership, but scanner use instead, so it's likely that many of these users are sharing a scanner with others. Nonetheless, what implications does this high rate of scanner use have for your products? How might your products, documentation, or tutorials be modified in order to take advantage of it?

Along the same lines, these users show a high level of modem usage. Overall, almost 40 percent of the respondents said they use modems, and that figure climbs to 52 percent for modular users.

Lots of Applications. A couple of years ago, Diagnostic Research performed a survey called "Macintosh or MS-DOS?" that showed that Mac users tended to use more applications than DOS users. While this more recent survey didn't make the same comparison, it did find that the respondents generally use many applications.

Overall, the median number of programs for compact users is six, and the figure goes up to nine for modular users. And good news for developers—users of both types of systems continue to buy more software. Almost half of the survey respondents said they had purchased an application within the previous three months, and more than 80 percent said they had purchased one within the previous year.

Not too surprisingly, word processing is the most popular "ever-used" application, with almost 100 percent of the respondents saying that they had used it at some time or another. It's also the most popular application when users are asked to name their "top three" types of programs (Fig. 5). However, there's a great deal of diversity among other applications also given "top three" status, strengthening the observation that Macintosh users tend to use their

systems for a broad range of tasks. (See the IntelliQuest MediaTrack results in the June issue of Apple Direct, which indicate a similar trend.)

All's Well That Ends Well. How did these Macintosh users feel about the Macintosh overall? Very favorably. More than 90 percent of them gave the Macintosh a “5” or a “6” on a six-point satisfaction scale, and three-quarters of them said they were “very likely” or “extremely likely” to recommend the Macintosh model they use to others.

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